

Morocco "Roc" Coleman, Robert "Big Bob" Blackwell, Cheryl Holland-Jones, the Educational Corporation of America (ECA), T. Michael Sullivan and the William Joiner Institute for the Study of War and Social Consequences, and Congressional staff members Ronnie Simmons, Lee Footer, Stephanie Anim-Yankah, Jonathan Halpern, Adam McCombs, George Henry, Hannah Kim, and Reba Raffaelli.

Congratulations on 25 years, during which the journey has been the destination.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOAQUIN CASTRO

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 91 on H.R. 3370, Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act of 2013, I am not recorded. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

CONGRATULATING THE MINORITY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AGENCY ON ITS 45TH ANNIVERSARY AND THE OPENING OF MBDA BUSINESS CENTER AT HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Minority Business Development Agency, MBDA, on its 45th anniversary and commend its commitment and success in promoting the growth and competitiveness of a critical segment of the U.S. economy, the minority business community. For the past 45 years, the MBDA has provided an essential service to this nation, working to level the playing field for minority-owned businesses.

The results speak for themselves. At the time of MBDA's creation there were only 322,000 minority-owned firms in the nation. Today, the number stands at 5.8 million; 215,000 of which are in the City of Houston. Over the last five years in particular, the MBDA has assisted firms gain access to over \$19 billion in contracts and capital resulting in the creation and retention of nearly 60,000 jobs.

Today, the MBDA is celebrating this day in my district by launching a new MBDA Business Center at Houston Community College, which was awarded a three-year \$900,000 grant to operate the MBDA Business Center. HCC's MBDA Business Center will help boost job creation and global competitiveness of minority-owned businesses across the nation. I look forward to continuing to work with MBDA and Houston Community College to create jobs locally so that we may thrive globally.

Congratulations, MBDA, on 45 years of great work. May the next 45 years be even better.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ALLYSON Y. SCHWARTZ

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 85, I was unable to attend the vote. Had I been present, I would have voted "no."

HONORING PATRICK DENEEN

HON. DAVID G. REICHERT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor an Olympic athlete from Washington State's 8th District, Mr. Patrick Deneen. Mr. Deneen just returned from representing our nation in the XXII Olympic Winter Games in Sochi, Russia. Mr. Deneen is an incredible athlete who has reached the pinnacle of his sport and achieved a well-deserved 6th place finish in the Men's Moguls event.

I applaud both his achievement and the hard work and perseverance that paid off during these games. Simply to attend the Olympics is an honor, and to do so well is a testament to everything Mr. Deneen has accomplished. I thank him for representing America so well, and I am proud to call him a constituent and a Washingtonian.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF DR. BENJAMIN J. LAMBERT III

HON. ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of my friend and former colleague in the Virginia General Assembly, Dr. Benjamin J. Lambert III, who passed away on Sunday, March 2, 2014.

Benny, as he was affectionately known by his friends, family, and constituents, was a pioneering figure in Virginia politics. We were both elected to the Virginia House of Delegates in 1977. In 1980, Benny became the first African American elected to represent the Commonwealth on the Democratic National Committee. In 1985, he was elected overwhelmingly to fill the seat vacated by then-Lieutenant Governor Doug Wilder. During my time serving alongside Benny, I always admired his ability to build strong relationships with his colleagues, work across the aisle, and take the tough positions that were not always politically popular but were the ones he believed were right for his constituents.

Benny was born in Richmond on January 29, 1937 to Frances and Benjamin J. Lambert, Jr. He attended Henrico County Schools at a time when they were still racially segregated. He graduated from Virginia Randolph High School in Glen Allen, just outside of Richmond. He went on to earn his undergraduate degree from Virginia Union University, and his graduate degree from the Massachusetts College of Optometry. After graduate school, Benny returned to Richmond and practiced

optometry in the Jackson Ward neighborhood. He was an active member of the Virginia, National and American optometric societies and was chosen as Virginia's Optometrist of the Year in 1980.

Benny came to the Virginia General Assembly after years of political and civic activism, which helped him to become a very influential and effective legislator during his 30 year tenure. He served on several committees in the General Assembly, including Education and Health, General Laws, Privileges and Elections, General Government, and Health and Human Resources. He also has the distinction of being the first African American in the 20th century to serve on the Virginia Senate Finance Committee.

Additionally, he chaired the Subcommittees on Higher Education and General Government, the Brown v. Board Scholarship Commission, and the Lead Abatement Subcommittee. Benny also served as a member of the Joint Commission on Health Care, the Joint Subcommittee Studying the Election Process and Voting Technologies, the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission, the Commission on State Employees Health Benefits Reform, and the Virginia Legislative Black Caucus. In 2010, Governor Bob McDonnell appointed him vice chair of the Commission on Government Reform and Restructuring.

Outside of government, Benny had a very active civic life. He was a member of the NAACP, the Richmond Crusade for Voters, the Jackson Ward Civic Association, the Richmond Jaycees, the North Richmond YMCA, and he served on the board of his alma mater, Virginia Union University. Benny was also an active member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.

Benny devoted his career in and out of public service to the citizens of Richmond and Central Virginia, always doing what he thought was best for his community, regardless of the political consequences.

Mr. Speaker, words alone cannot express the tremendous loss to the Richmond community and the Commonwealth of Virginia with Benny's passing. Benny Lambert was a humble optometrist that achieved so much on behalf of his community during his 77 years of life. My thoughts and prayers are with Benny's wife Carolyn, his children and grandchildren, and his many friends and admirers during this difficult time.

RED BANK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BUSINESS MENTOR PROGRAM

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, The American Dream is attainable with hard work and dedication. South Carolina is very fortunate to have devoted teachers who dedicated to helping every child succeed. This week, a group of teachers and students from Red Bank Elementary School in Lexington, South Carolina, are visiting Washington to see the government at work. I am very proud of this group of young people, as they are dedicated to achieving a bright future by participating in their school's Business Mentor Program.